

excluding fats and lipoids from the diet. We hope that added knowledge of cholesterol metabolism will gradually lead to a better control of the formation of gall stones.

Surgery still holds the leading place in treatment of gall stones which cause symptoms.

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## DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS <sup>1</sup>

(ABSTRACT)

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In our diagnosis, our therapy, our prognosis, we must consider the age of the patient. With our finer methods of diagnosis, more increased skill in the use of diet and physical methods, and better surgical procedure, there is an ever increasing number of cures in the case of patients in the 60s and 70s, where 10 or 20 years ago little would have been done to cure, and only halfhearted attempts made to make them more comfortable.

A considerable portion of the happiness of the old is dependent upon the condition of their digestive apparatus. Age has its compensations for the interests of the soul, even the activities of the mind may be enhanced by broader vision and the philosophic calm of increasing years. But they become as dust and ashes if the tongue be coated and the stomach awry.

Cancer is and always will be the subject of supreme interest to physicians and laity. Its consideration is of peculiar importance in this discussion because while met with in early life, it is peculiarly a disease of later life and old age.

Cancer seems to be on the increase, but how much of this is due to better methods of diagnosis and ever-increasing interest in the disease; how much to the steady increase of the average age of man with *ipso facto* the increasing in-

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cidence of diseases more frequently met with in later life; and how much to a real increase in the disease, irrespective of age, but possibly caused by errors and accidents peculiar to an increasingly complex civilization, it is hard to say. Cancer of the stomach is very common, next in frequency to uterine cancer.

In all cases, but especially in the middle aged and old, the possibility of malignancy should be suspected in every one whose intestinal habit shows a change. While surgery is the only cure, early diagnosis is important to give surgery a fair chance of success. Early suspicion is more apt to lead to early diagnosis.

Simple rules of living as regards rest and exercise for the aged, with a temperate diet and as few drugs as possible are indicated in the treatment of dyspepsia in the old, the knowledge that comes from experience and common sense is of far greater value than that which comes from the library studies of the most exquisite perfection.